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Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

Report of the Secretary-General*, **

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 33/15, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of that resolution at its thirty-ninth session. It covers the period from September 2017 to August 2018. The report contains information on the activities undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to establish and strengthen national human rights institutions; on support provided by the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to national human rights institutions; on cooperation between institutions and the international human rights system; and on support provided by OHCHR to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and relevant regional networks. It should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in accrediting national institutions in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (A/HRC/39/21).

* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent information.
** The annexes to the present report are circulated as received, in the language of submission only.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 33/15, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the implementation of that resolution at its thirty-ninth session.

2. The present report outlines activities implemented since the previous report of the Secretary-General on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights to the General Assembly (A/72/277), i.e. between September 2017 and August 2018. It should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General to the Human Rights Council on the activities of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in accrediting national institutions in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) (A/HRC/39/21).

3. In resolution 33/15, the Human Rights Council commended the important role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in assisting the development of independent and effective national human rights institutions, in accordance with the Paris Principles. It also recognized the potential for strengthened and complementary cooperation among OHCHR, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, regional networks of national human rights institutions and national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights. The Council also encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to give high priority to requests from Member States for assistance in the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles.

4. It should be noted that, in its resolution 33/15, the Council also recognized the importance of the independent voice of national human rights institutions in promoting and protecting all human rights, particularly in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It thus welcomed the adoption of the Mérida Declaration on the role of national human rights institutions in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[1]

5. The existence of independent national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles has been recognized as an indicator of progress by States under Sustainable Development Goal 16 to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (see indicator 16.a.1).

II. Support by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to national human rights institutions

A. Advisory services

6. The National Institutions, Regional Mechanisms and Civil Society Section is the focal point within OHCHR for the coordination of the activities to establish and/or strengthen national human rights institutions. Together with the field presences of OHCHR and other United Nations entities, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), OHCHR assists Governments in establishing national human rights institutions and/or contributes to building their capacity. In that context, OHCHR works closely with regional intergovernmental organizations, academic institutions, civil society and other stakeholders.

[1] See A/HRC/31/NI/14, annex.

7. OHCHR provides technical and legal assistance to national human rights institutions and other stakeholders, in particular regarding constitutional and legislative frameworks relating to the establishment, nature, functions, powers and responsibilities of institutions. It also conducts and supports comparative analyses, technical cooperation projects, needs assessments and evaluation missions to establish national human rights institutions or strengthen their capacity to discharge their mandate effectively.

8. During the period under review, OHCHR provided advice and/or assistance aimed at establishing and/or strengthening human rights institutions in Afghanistan, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Colombia, the Congo, the Cook Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, the Russian Federation, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Uzbekistan and the State of Palestine.

9. In some cases, this assistance was provided jointly with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other partners.

1. Africa

10. During the period under review, the OHCHR regional offices for Central, East, Southern and West Africa, the OHCHR country offices in Burundi, Guinea and Uganda, the human rights advisers to the United Nations country teams in Chad, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, and the human rights components of the United Nations peace missions in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia,[2] Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan (in Darfur) continued, in consultation with OHCHR, to provide advice on and assistance in the establishment and/or strengthening of national human rights institutions.

11. During the period under review, OHCHR provided legislative advice to Chad, the Congo and Djibouti for the establishment of a national human rights institution in compliance with the Paris Principles.

12. In February and March 2018, OHCHR provided technical advice to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics on how to use treaty body recommendations and good statistical practices to include data on indigenous peoples, persons with albinism and intersex persons in the census of 2019. OHCHR provided financial support to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights for the organization of a retreat in April 2018 on election-related sexual and gender-based violence. In June 2018, OHCHR provided substantive support for a meeting between the Commission and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics on data-collection methodology for indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (16.1.1, 16.1.3, 16.3.1 and 16.10.1).

13. In December 2017, OHCHR provided technical support to the Independent National Commission on Human Rights of Liberia for the development of a five-year strategic plan. OHCHR also continued to provide technical and financial support for the development of a complaint-handling mechanism that was launched in January 2018. It also provided technical support to the Commission for the recruitment of three regional coordinators.

14. During the period under review, OHCHR provided legal and technical advice to the Independent National Human Rights Commission of Madagascar. It conducted 22 training sessions for the Commission's staff and provided financial and technical support for the Commission to conduct information campaigns on access to justice and remedies for victims of human rights violations. In March 2018, OHCHR provided technical support for the Commission's mid-term evaluation to enhance its compliance with the Paris Principles.

15. In April 2018, OHCHR organized a workshop to strengthen the capacity of the National Human Rights Commission of Mali to discharge its mandate in compliance with the Paris Principles. OHCHR also financially supported the participation of a resource person from the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions in that workshop.

[2] The human rights component of the United Nations Mission in Liberia was closed on 31 March 2018.

16. In November 2017, the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the South Sudan Human Rights Commission jointly organized a human rights forum on freedom of expression, gathering government officials, civil society organizations and the media. On that occasion, they showed a video of the meeting on South Sudan of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review so as to raise the awareness of participants of the universal periodic review. In December 2017, the UNMISS Human Rights Division and the South Sudan Human Rights Commission conducted a series of events on gender-based violence in cooperation with the Government and non-governmental actors. The UNMISS Human Rights Division assisted the Commission to produce a fact sheet on its activities and to launch its 2017 annual report.

17. In March 2018, OHCHR, the Uganda Human Rights Commission and some government agencies conducted two workshops on harnessing human rights indicators and on the human rights-based approach to data collection in the measurement and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Uganda. The workshops also focused on Goal 16 and related recommendations from international human rights mechanisms.

2. Americas and the Caribbean

18. During the period under review, the OHCHR regional offices for South America and for Central America, the country offices in Bolivia (Plurinational State of),[3] Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, the human rights advisers to the United Nations country teams in Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Paraguay, and the human rights component of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti continued to provide advice on and assistance in strengthening national human rights institutions, in consultation with the OHCHR National Institutions, Regional Mechanisms and Civil Society Section.

19. During the period under review, OHCHR and the Defensoría del Pueblo of Colombia conducted joint missions to ensure the peaceful resolution of societal conflicts throughout the country. OHCHR also supported the engagement of the institution in the universal periodic review of Colombia.

3. Asia and the Pacific

20. During the period under review, the OHCHR regional offices for Southeast Asia and for the Pacific, the country offices in Cambodia and in the Republic of Korea, the human rights advisers to the United Nations country teams in Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, and the human rights component of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan continued to provide advice and assistance for the establishment or strengthening of national human rights institutions, in consultation with the OHCHR National Institutions, Regional Mechanisms and Civil Society Section.

21. In Malaysia, OHCHR, UNDP and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions conducted a capacity assessment of the Human Rights Commission, leading to the adoption of a plan of action.

22. OHCHR also provided advice to the National Commission for Human Rights of Pakistan, including regarding its participation in treaty body reviews. In January 2018, OHCHR and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions conducted a capacity assessment of the Commission in Pakistan. In February 2018, OHCHR conducted training on the international human rights system for members and staff of the Commission.

23. OHCHR continued to provide support to the Ombudsman of Timor-Leste to conduct human rights training for police officers. Since the launch of the programme in 2015, 611 police officers have benefited from this training. OHCHR also provided technical support to the Ombudsman for the drafting of a comprehensive manual on human rights for armed forces.

[3] The OHCHR country office in the Plurinational State of Bolivia was closed in December 2017.

4. Europe and Central Asia

24. During the period under review, the OHCHR regional offices for Europe and for Central Asia, the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, the human rights advisers for the South Caucasus, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Serbia, the human rights officer working with the United Nations country team in the Republic of Moldova, the joint OHCHR-Russian Federation project and the Human Rights Office in the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, continued to provide advice and assistance for the establishment and/or strengthening of human rights institutions, in consultation with the OHCHR National Institutions, Regional Mechanisms and Civil Society Section.

25. In Kyrgyzstan, OHCHR and UNDP provided support to the Ombudsman to develop its capacity in preventing and countering violent extremism.

26. In September 2017, OHCHR, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Russian Federation and the city of Moscow jointly organized a round table on the promotion of diversity and a discrimination-free environment in cities that would host the International Federation of Association Football's World Cup in 2018. In December 2017, OHCHR, the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Forum of Women of Moscow jointly organized a conference on domestic violence against women.

27. In Turkmenistan, OHCHR and UNDP facilitated a mission of the special envoy of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions to draft a road map for the development of an ombudsman institution compliant with the Paris Principles.

28. In Uzbekistan, OHCHR, UNDP, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the National Human Rights Centre of Uzbekistan organized a conference on international and regional practices in monitoring, protecting and promoting human rights in the context of reforms related to human rights, justice and gender equality.

5. Middle East and North Africa

29. During the period under review, the OHCHR regional office for the Middle East and for North Africa, the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, the OHCHR offices in Mauritania, Tunisia, Yemen and the State of Palestine, the human rights components of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya continued to provide advice and assistance for the establishment and/or strengthening of national human rights institutions, in consultation with the OHCHR National Institutions, Regional Mechanisms and Civil Society Section.

30. Together with the UNDP office in Algeria, OHCHR discussed with the National Human Rights Council of Algeria the possibility of a technical cooperation programme aimed at strengthening the Council's capacity in discharging its mandate.

31. In March 2018, in the framework of the OHCHR technical cooperation programme with the National Council for Human Rights of Egypt, OHCHR conducted a workshop on Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5 and 8 for the staff of the Council, representatives of various ministries, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the National Council for Women, the National Council for Disability Affairs, and several non-governmental organizations.

32. In October 2017, OHCHR conducted a workshop on the role of national human rights institutions in the implementation of recommendations from the universal periodic review for staff members of the national human rights institution of Oman as well as representatives of various ministries and civil society organizations.

33. OHCHR assisted the national human rights institution of Qatar in taking up cases with the international human rights mechanisms, e.g. the special rapporteurs.

34. In October and November 2017, OHCHR conducted a workshop on human rights indicators in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for the staff of the Independent Commission for Human Rights of the State of Palestine, with a focus on indicators 16.10.1, 16.b.1 and 16.1.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals. OHCHR also provided technical assistance

to the Commission in drafting its submission for the review of the initial report of the State of Palestine by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. OHCHR also provided technical assistance to strengthen the role of the Commission in facilitating national consultations on State party reports to the treaty bodies.

35. The United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region continued to cooperate with the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions to strengthen the capacity of national human rights institutions in the region (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Tunisia and the State of Palestine). In October 2017, in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, the Centre organized training on the interaction between national human rights institutions and the United Nations treaty bodies. In December 2017, it organized jointly with the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions a workshop on the role of national human rights institutions in monitoring and documenting human rights violations and on handling complaints.

B. Support to regional and subregional initiatives of national human rights institutions

1. Africa

36. In November 2017, OHCHR provided financial support to and participated in the Eleventh Biennial Conference of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions in Kigali, which resulted in a declaration underscoring the role of national human rights institutions in monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

37. In April 2018, OHCHR, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the Economic Community of West African States and the West African Network of National Human Rights Institutions organized regional consultations for the national human rights institutions in West Africa to enhance their capacity to promote and protect human rights, with a focus on peace and security, migrants and gender perspectives.

38. Also in April 2018, OHCHR, the National Human Rights Council of Morocco, the Francophone Association of National Human Rights Commissions and the International Organization of La Francophonie organized a workshop to share best practices in the accreditation process of national human rights institutions for the staff of the national human rights institutions of Belgium, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Madagascar and Mali.

2. Asia and the Pacific

39. In September 2017, OHCHR participated in the Second Conference on Global Ageing and Human Rights of Older Persons including on the role of national human rights institutions, held in Seoul within the framework of the Asia-Europe Meeting.

40. In March 2018, in the margins of the Fifth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, OHCHR, the Co-Chairs of the Regional United Nations Development Group, the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Network, the Government of Denmark, the Danish Institute for Human Rights and the Indigenous Peoples' Major Group for Sustainable Development jointly organized a side event on human rights and the 2030 Agenda with a focus on Goal 17: strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

3. Europe and Central Asia

41. OHCHR chaired a meeting on the human rights of older persons during the meeting of the General Assembly of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, in November 2017.

42. In November 2017, OHCHR and UNDP organized the second regional consultation of Central Asian national human rights institutions, in the framework of the Central Asia Support Initiative for National Human Rights Institutions. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a statement by the five national human rights institutions regarding their cooperation. In February 2018, during the annual meeting of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, OHCHR, UNDP and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions jointly organized a side event on their tripartite partnership in support of national human rights institutions in Central Asia. In April 2018, OHCHR and UNDP supported the second forum of national preventive mechanisms against torture, organized by the Ombudsman of Kazakhstan for the national human rights institutions in Central Asia.

4. Middle East and North Africa

43. In October 2017, OHCHR participated in the annual meeting of the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions, held in Algiers, and held bilateral meetings with participating national human rights institutions to discuss the accreditation process and/or further cooperation with a view to strengthening their capacity to discharge their mandate in conformity with international standards.

C. Contributions to international initiatives supporting national human rights institutions

1. Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions

44. The Statute of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions provides that its general and Bureau meetings, the meetings of the Subcommittee on Accreditation and international conferences of the Global Alliance shall be held under the auspices of, and in cooperation with, OHCHR. Thus, OHCHR provided financial and substantive support, as well as secretariat services, to the annual meeting of the Global Alliance, in February 2018, its two Bureau meetings, in November 2017 and February 2018, and the two sessions of the Subcommittee on Accreditation (see para. 46 below).

45. As indicated throughout the present report, OHCHR also continued to provide financial support to various projects of the Global Alliance.

2. Subcommittee on Accreditation

46. OHCHR continued to provide substantive support, technical advice and secretariat services to the Subcommittee on Accreditation. During the period under review, the Subcommittee met twice, in November 2017 and May 2018, and reviewed 24 institutions.

3. Fellowship programme for staff of national human rights institutions

47. OHCHR maintains its fellowship programme for staff members of national human rights institutions with A status. Initiated in 2008, the programme is designed to provide fellows with information on and working experience with the international human rights system, and to familiarize them with the work of OHCHR in the promotion and protection of human rights. During the period under review, fellows from the human rights institutions of Albania, Morocco, Nigeria, Serbia, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania participated in the programme.

III. Support from the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to national human rights institutions

48. OHCHR, UNDP and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions entered into a strategic tripartite partnership in 2011 to support national human rights institutions at the global, regional and national levels. In line with their mandate, each partner brings specific expertise to the partnership in support of national human rights

institutions around the world. In February 2017, the leadership of the three partners signed a letter of intent formalizing their commitment to enhancing their cooperation. In June 2018, during the meeting to review their tripartite partnership, the partners continued to discuss areas of strategic priority and engagement, including a common understanding of their own role and that of national human rights institutions in the context of the 2030 Agenda, particularly Goal 16.

49. In September 2017, UNDP, the Commission of the African Union and the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions organized a forum on the nexus between strong human rights institutions and national development. During the period under review, UNDP also supported the establishment of a national human rights institution in Botswana and in the Gambia. In Sierra Leone, UNDP provided technical expertise to the national human rights institution to monitor the elections and supported the development of a tool to monitor the implementation of universal periodic review and treaty body recommendations. In Zimbabwe, UNDP provided technical and advisory support to the Human Rights Commission to develop a strategy to monitor human rights in the electoral cycle, to design a campaign on the right to vote and to develop an electronic system to handle complaints. It also provided advice to the Commission on how to conduct visits to prisons, mental health institutions, and care homes for seniors and children.

50. In the Asia-Pacific region, UNDP and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions continued to implement projects on the protection of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons for the national human rights institutions of Bangladesh, Fiji, the Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. In April 2018, UNDP and the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal jointly organized a conference for national human rights institutions in South Asia on addressing impunity and realizing human rights. In the Philippines, UNDP supported the Commission on Human Rights to advocate for the adoption of a bill to address all forms of discrimination and violence based on ethnicity, race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, language, disability, HIV status and educational attainment. In Sri Lanka, UNDP signed a letter of agreement with the Human Rights Commission with a view to strengthening its capacity.

51. In Europe and Central Asia, UNDP supported the national human rights institutions of Armenia and Ukraine to strengthen their capacity. UNDP and the European Union provided support to the Public Defender of Georgia to host the International Conference on Business and Human Rights in December 2017. UNDP and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions cooperated on a number of regional initiatives with the national human rights institutions of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

IV. Cooperation between United Nations human rights mechanisms and national human rights institutions

52. Some national human rights institutions monitored the implementation of recommendations and observations formulated by the international human rights system. As independent bodies with a mandate to advise the authorities, they linked these recommendations to policymakers, especially Governments and parliaments. In addition, many national human rights institutions served as a bridge between the State and civil society, promoting broad-based participation in shaping policies and implementing recommendations from the international human rights system.

53. In May 2018, OHCHR, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation organized a one-week training course for 13 staff members of national human rights institutions with A status to better engage with the international human rights system.

A. Human Rights Council

54. In coordination with the Global Alliance, OHCHR continued to support the engagement of national human rights institutions with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms.

55. In accordance with the rules of procedure of the Human Rights Council, which enable the participation of national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles in its sessions, 23 national human rights institutions delivered statements (9 in writing and 44 orally, including 17 by video),[4] submitted documentation, participated in general debates, organized parallel events or interacted with special procedure mandate holders (see annex I).

1. Universal periodic review

56. In accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 16/21 and General Assembly resolution 65/281, the stakeholders' reports include a section dedicated to the contributions of national human rights institutions.

57. In November 2017, during the twenty-eighth session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, six institutions with A status and one with B status submitted information for reports summarizing information from stakeholders. In January 2018, at the twenty-ninth session of the Working Group, three institutions with A status and one with B status submitted input for stakeholders' reports. During the thirtieth session of the Working Group in May 2018, four institutions with A status and one with B status submitted information for the stakeholders' report (see annex II).

58. Given the role that national human rights institutions can play in the follow-up to the universal periodic review and in developing tools to monitor and assess progress in the implementation of the recommendations, OHCHR continued to support and encourage their participation in the review.

2. Special procedures

59. In accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 16/21 and General Assembly resolution 65/281, during sessions of the Human Rights Council, institutions with A status are able to intervene immediately after the State concerned during the interactive dialogue between the Council and special procedure mandate holders following their presentation of their country mission reports. Furthermore, institutions with A status may nominate candidates for special procedure mandates.

60. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons has strengthened her engagement with national human rights institutions. In September 2017, she participated in the annual conference of South-East Asian national human rights institutions and, in November 2017, she facilitated a session on the impact of conflict on internally displaced persons and refugees and the role of national human rights institutions during the biennial conference of the Asia-Pacific Forum. During the annual meeting of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in February 2018, the Special Rapporteur organized a side event on the work of national human rights institutions with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and a workshop for selected national human rights institutions to share their experience in addressing internal displacement.

3. Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

61. A session of the annual meeting of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions was dedicated to developing guidelines on the collaboration of the Expert

[4] Compared with the previous reporting period (September 2016–August 2017), there was a decrease of 53 per cent in the number of written statements submitted by national institutions and an increase of 5 per cent in the number of oral statements. Participation through video statements increased by 12 per cent between the two reporting periods and by 140 per cent between the previous reporting period and the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sessions of the Human Rights Council.

Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with national human rights institutions. The latter were also invited to submit information for a study by the Expert Mechanism on free, prior and informed consent, to be submitted to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-ninth session. At its annual session in July 2018, the Expert Mechanism held an interactive dialogue with national human rights institutions.

B. United Nations treaty bodies

62. OHCHR continued to support the engagement of national human rights institutions with United Nations treaty bodies. OHCHR, as the secretariat of the treaty bodies, and the Geneva representative of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions liaised with national human rights institutions of States under review to encourage them to provide written or oral information and/or to attend the sessions of treaty bodies. The OHCHR National Institutions, Regional Mechanisms and Civil Society Section continued to prepare briefing notes on national human rights institutions for the attention of treaty bodies and to disseminate relevant recommendations and concluding observations of treaty bodies to the national institutions.

63. During the reporting period, the treaty bodies reviewed 132 States parties, of which 89 had national human rights institutions. Of these institutions, 57 submitted information and 43 provided briefings to treaty bodies (see annex III).

64. In comparison with the previous reporting period, there was an increase of 5 per cent in the submission of information to treaty bodies and of 14 per cent in the number of national human rights institutions providing briefings to them.

65. Treaty bodies continued to provide national human rights institutions with information notes, advice and tools to facilitate their effective engagement and have invited their representatives to their meetings.

66. At its sixty-ninth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided to establish a working group consisting of its members and national human rights institutions with a view to enhancing their interaction in a more structured manner.

67. In March 2018, OHCHR, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and the International Disability Alliance organized the first interactive annual debate with independent monitoring frameworks and national human rights institutions. The debate focused on national human rights institutions sharing best practices in monitoring article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and on the participation of persons with disabilities in monitoring activities at the national level. The discussion resulted in the adoption of a joint declaration to establish a follow-up group, comprised of national human rights institutions and other independent monitoring frameworks, to develop a common framework to monitor the implementation of article 19.

C. Other United Nations mechanisms and processes

68. In December 2017, the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing invited national human rights institutions to attend and contribute to its ninth session, in July 2018.

69. In March 2018, national human rights institutions participated in the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which, in its agreed conclusions, encouraged its secretariat to continue considering how to enhance the participation of national human rights institutions fully compliant with the Paris Principles, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council.

70. In June 2018, national human rights institutions were accredited to the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions delivered a statement at the Conference and hosted a side event, in cooperation with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the International Disability Alliance and UNDP.

71. National human rights institutions with A status participated in all stages of the development of the global compact for migration, including intergovernmental negotiations leading to the 2018 Intergovernmental Conference.

V. Role of national human rights institutions with A status

72. In 1993, the General Assembly welcomed the Paris Principles, while the World Conference on Human Rights encouraged the establishment and strengthening of national institutions with respect to the Paris Principles, reaffirming the important and constructive role they play in the promotion and protection of human rights.

73. By July 2018, i.e. 25 years later, 112 institutions had been accredited in accordance with these principles, of which 80 with A status and 32 with B status. Of the 80 institutions with A status, 21 are operating in Africa, 15 in the Americas and the Caribbean, 16 in Asia and the Pacific, and 28 in Europe.

74. The Human Rights Council and the General Assembly both recognized the role of OHCHR in assisting the development of independent and effective national human rights institutions.[5] Both bodies have also recognized the important role of national human rights institutions fully compliant with the Paris Principles as key partners of the United Nations, granting them enhanced participatory rights in United Nations mechanisms and processes. Being more visible, institutions with A status may face reprisals and other acts of intimidation, in relation to their cooperation with United Nations mechanisms and processes. In its resolution 33/15, the Human Rights Council stressed that national human rights institutions and their members and staff should not face any form of reprisal or intimidation, including political pressure, physical intimidation, harassment or unjustifiable budgetary limitations, as a result of activities undertaken in accordance with their respective mandates, including when taking up individual cases or when reporting on serious or systematic violations in their countries.

75. National human rights institutions in full compliance with the Paris Principles have been recognized as playing a key role in the implementation and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. OHCHR, UNDP, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and the four regional networks of national human rights institutions have supported national human rights institutions to implement the Mérida Declaration.

VI. Recommendations

A. Recommendations to Member States

76. **Member States should establish national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris Principles.**

77. **Member States should fully observe the independence of existing institutions and support their strengthening to enable the effective fulfilment of their mandate, taking into account the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and the advice of OHCHR.**

78. **Member States should ensure that national human rights institutions are provided with a broad mandate to protect and promote all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, and are granted adequate powers of investigation into allegations of human rights violations, including the competency to visit places of deprivation of liberty.**

[5] See General Assembly resolution 72/181.

79. **Member States should ensure that national human rights institutions are provided with adequate human and financial resources and the autonomy necessary to freely propose and manage their own budgets and recruit their own staff members.**

80. **Member States should ensure the formalization of a clear, transparent and participatory selection and appointment process for members and staff of national human rights institutions in their founding law.**

81. **Member States should ensure that members and staff of national human rights institutions enjoy immunity while discharging their functions in good faith; take the measures necessary to protect them against threats and harassment; ensure the prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into alleged reprisals or intimidation against members and staff of institutions, or against individuals who cooperate or seek to cooperate with them, and ensure perpetrators are held accountable.**

82. **Member States should establish effective mechanisms to prevent cases of reprisals against national human rights institutions, including early warning mechanisms, human rights education and awareness-raising programmes.**

83. **Member States should continue to provide financial contributions to OHCHR to sustain high-quality support for the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions and to provide the secretariat support to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and its Subcommittee on Accreditation.**

B. Recommendations to national human rights institutions

84. **National human rights institutions should seek regular and constructive cooperation with relevant State bodies to promote the inclusion of human rights in legislation, policies and programmes.**

85. **National human rights institutions should develop, formalize and maintain cooperation with civil society organizations and strengthen their capacity to participate meaningfully in the promotion and protection of human rights.**

86. **National human rights institutions should contribute to deliberations of United Nations mechanisms and processes, including in discussions on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

87. **National human rights institutions should continue to advocate for their independent participation in relevant United Nations mechanisms and processes, including the 2030 Agenda.**

88. **National human rights institutions should contribute to preventing and addressing cases of reprisals, and establish protective measures and mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders.**

89. **National human rights institutions should continue to engage with international and regional human rights mechanisms and to promote the implementation of their recommendations.**

Annex I

Submissions from national human rights institutions to the Human Rights Council (September 2017–March 2018)

Country institution	*Segment*	*Date*
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions	General segment Video statement	February 2018
Australian Human Rights Commission	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Video statement	March 2018
National Human Rights Commission of Mexico	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Video statement	March 2018
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Video statement	March 2018
People's Advocate of Albania	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion Video statement	March 2018
National Human Rights Council of Morocco	Agenda item 3 Joint study on transitional justice	March 2018
Office of the Counsel for Human Rights of Guatemala	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of Guatemala	March 2018
National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of the Republic of Korea	March 2018
Human Rights Commission of Zambia	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of Zambia Video statement	March 2018
Independent Commission for Human Rights of the State of Palestine	Agenda item 7 Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 Video statement	March 2018
Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission	Agenda item 10 Other High Commissioner/Secretary-General country reports or oral briefings Video statement	March 2018
Office of the Ombudsman of Haiti	Agenda item 10 Other High Commissioner/Secretary-General country reports or oral briefings	March 2018
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions	Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming The promotion and protection of human rights in the light of the universal periodic review mechanism: challenges and opportunities	February 2018
National Human Rights Commission of	Annual high-level panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming	February 2018

Country institution	*Segment*	*Date*
Mauritania	The promotion and protection of human rights in the light of the universal periodic review mechanism: challenges and opportunities	
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions	High-level panel discussion on the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action Video statement	February 2018
Australian Human Rights Commission	Annual debate on the rights of persons with disabilities Video statement	March 2018
Australian Human Rights Commission	Debate on promoting tolerance in context of racial discrimination Video statement	March 2018
Equality and Human Rights Commission of Great Britain (also on behalf of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission)	Debate on promoting tolerance in context of racial discrimination Video statement	March 2018
National Human Rights Council of Morocco	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence	September 2017
Ombudsman of Portugal	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation	September 2017
National Human Rights Commission of Mexico	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation Video statement	September 2017
National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea on behalf of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on the rights of older persons Video statement	September 2017
National Human Rights Council of Morocco	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on the rights of older persons	September 2017
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (also on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission of Great Britain and the Scottish Human Rights Commission)	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on hazardous wastes Video statement	September 2017
National Human Rights Committee of Qatar	Agenda item 3 Special Rapporteur on coercive measures	September 2017

Country institution	*Segment*	*Date*
Australian Human Rights Commission	Agenda item 3 and 5 Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples Video statement	September 2017
Office of the Ombudsman of Ecuador on behalf of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions	Agenda item 3 and 5 Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	September 2017
Independent National Commission on Human Rights in Burundi	Agenda item 4 Interactive dialogue with the commission of inquiry on Burundi	September 2017
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions	Agenda item 5 General debate	September 2017
Office of the Ombudsman of Ecuador	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of Ecuador	September 2017
National Human Rights Council of Morocco	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of Morocco	September 2017
National Commission on Human Rights of Indonesia	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of Indonesia	September 2017
Finnish Human Rights Centre	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of Finland	September 2017
Equality and Human Rights Commission of Great Britain (also on behalf of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission)	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	September 2017
National Human Rights Commission of India	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of India	September 2017
Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of the Philippines	September 2017
Human Rights Defenders of Poland	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of Poland	September 2017
Netherlands Institute for Human Rights	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of the Netherlands Video statement	September 2017
South African Human Rights Commission	Agenda item 6 Universal periodic review outcome of South Africa	September 2017
German Institute for Human Rights	Agenda item 9 Interactive dialogue with the Working Group on African Descent	September 2017

Country/institution	*Segment*	*Date*
National Human Rights Committee of Qatar	Biennial panel discussion on unilateral coercive measures and human rights	September 2017
Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institution (on behalf of the Office of the Ombudsman of Argentina, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the German Institute for Human Rights, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice of Ghana and the National Commission on Human Rights of Indonesia)	Annual discussion on integration of a gender perspective	September 2017
Office of the Ombudsman of Ecuador	Annual panel discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples	September 2017
Australian Human Rights Commission	Annual panel discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples Video statement	September 2017

Annex II

Engagement of national human rights institutions in the third cycle of the universal periodic review (2017–2018)

Thirtieth session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (2018)

State (in order of review)	*Written contribution for summary (as used)*[a]	*Oral statement to Human Rights Council during the adoption of the outcome of the universal periodic review of the country concerned (A status national human rights institutions only)*[b]
Germany	Yes (A status)	..
Colombia	Yes (A status)	..
Canada	Yes (A status)	..
Bangladesh	Yes (B status)	..
Russian Federation	Yes (A status)	..
Azerbaijan		..
Cameroon		..

Twenty-ninth session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (2018)

State (in order of review)	*Written contribution for summary (as used)*[a]	*Oral statement to Human Rights Council during the adoption of the outcome of the universal periodic review of the country concerned (A status national human rights institutions only)*[c]
France	Yes (A status)	..
Mali		..
Burundi		..
Luxembourg	Yes (A status)	..
Montenegro	Yes (B status)	..
Serbia	Yes (A status)	..

Twenty-eighth session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (2017)

State (in order of review)	*Written contribution for summary (as used)*[a]	*Oral statement to Human Rights Council during the adoption of the outcome of the universal periodic review of the country concerned (A status national human rights institutions only)*
Argentina	Yes (A status)	No statement made
Ghana		No statement made
Peru	Yes (A status)	No statement made
Guatemala	Yes (A status)	Agenda item 6 (thirty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council) Universal periodic review of Guatemala
Republic of Korea	Yes (A status)	Agenda item 6 (thirty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council) Universal periodic review of the Republic of Korea

State (in order of review)	*Written contribution for summary (as used)*[a]	*Oral statement to Human Rights Council during the adoption of the outcome of the universal periodic review of the country concerned (A status national human rights institutions only)*
Zambia	Yes (A status)	Agenda item 6 (thirty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council) Universal periodic review of Zambia
Ukraine	Yes (A status)	No statement made
Sri Lanka	Yes (B status)	No statement made

[a] "Yes" appears only where institutions made written contributions.

[b] To be considered at the meeting of the Human Rights Council in September 2018.

[c] To be considered at the meeting of the Human Rights Council in June 2018.

Annex III

Engagement of national human rights institutions in the work of the treaty bodies (September 2017–August 2018)

Committee	*Number of States parties reviewed*	*Number of States parties with a national human rights institution*	*Submission of information*	*Briefing*
Committee against Torture	8	7	4	3
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	12	9	5	2
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	19	9	9	8
Human Rights Committee	18	13	6	6
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	20	10	5	6
Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	14	12	10	4
Committee on the Rights of the Child	23	13	9	6
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	13	12	9	8
Committee on Enforced Disappearances	5	4	0	0
Total	**132**	**89**	**57**	**43**